

Message Text

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14

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SUBJ: KOMEITO AND LDP CANDIDATES WIN FUKUOAKA BY-ELECTION

SUMMARY: ON DEC 23, KATSUTOSHI ONIKI (KOMEITO) AND SUSUMU NARAHASHI (LDP), WERE ELECTED TO HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES IN FUKUOKA BY-ELECTION. PERSONALITIES, RATHER THAN PARTY LABELS OR ISSUES, APPEAR TO HAVE CARRIED MOST WEIGHT WITH VOTERS. END SUMMARY.

1. KATSUTOSHI ONIKI (KOMEITO) AND SUSUMU NARAHASHI (LDP) WERE ELECTED TO HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES IN FUKUOKA BY-ELECTION HELD DEC 23. ELECTION, IN FUKUOKA THIRD DISTRICT, WAS CONDUCTED TO FILL SEATS VACATED BY DEATHS OF MASUO ARAKI AND WATARU NARAHASHI, BOTH LDP MEMBERS. VOTER TURNOUT OF 391,220 REPRESENTED 66 PERCENT OF THOSE ELIGIBLE TO CAST BALLOTS. BY COMPARISON, TURNOUT FOR DEC 1972 GENERAL ELECTION WAS 77.84 PERCENT.

2. ONIKI (69) LED EIGHT-MAN FIELD WITH 95,332 VOTES (25,000 BETTER THAN IN 1972 ELECTION BID). FORMER DIETMAN (CHAIRMAN OF LOWER HOUSE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON COAL) AND MEMBER OF KOMEITO CONTROL COMMITTEE, HE RECEIVED HEAVY KOMEITO-SOKA GAKKAI SUPPORT. OUR CONSULATE IN FUKUOKA DESCRIBED HIM, DESPITE AGE, AS QTE CHARISMATIC UNQTE AND HAD PICKED HIM, LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ALONG WITH NARAHASHI, AS LIKELY WINNER. NARAHASHI (39) WHO

RECEIVED 80,862 VOTES, FOLLOWED JAPANESE TRADITION BY SUCCEEDING TO LATE FATHER'S DIET SEAT. DIRECTOR OF NATIONAL ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION, FORMER MITSUI BUSSAN EMPLOYEE AND ONE-TIME SECRETARY TO HIS FATHER, HE REPORTEDLY CAPITALIZED ON HIS YOUTH AND ALSO BENEFITTED FROM TRANSFER OF SUPPORT FOR DECEASED FATHER, COMMON POLITICAL PHENOMENON IN JAPANESE POLITICS. DEFEATED CANDIDATES WERE: MEGUMI MACHIDORI, JSP, 68,611; JI KOGA, LDP, 54,904; SABURO MATSUKURA, JCP, 32,734; TATSUNOSUKE EGAMI, INDEPENDENT (JSP LINE); 31,692; SAMUMA TAKAHARA, INDEPENDENT, 15,231; AND TOSHIKI HARADA, INDEPENDENT, 6,356.

3. AS RESULT OF ELECTION, HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES PARTY STRENGTH IS: LDP 280, JSP118, JCP 40, KOMEITO 30, DSP 20, INDEPENDENT 1 AND VACANCIES 2.

4. COMMENT: PERSONALITY, RATHER THAN PARTY LABEL OR ISSUES, AGAIN APPEARS TO HAVE COUNTED MOST WITH VOTERS ON ELECTION DAY. WHILE FUKUOKA CONTEST IS OF RELATIVELY MINOR IMPORTANCE FOR NATIONAL LEVEL POLITICS, LOSS OF ONE SEAT AND FACT OPPOSITION CANDIDATES VOTE TOTAL INCREASED TO OVER HALF IN TRADITIONALLY CONSERVATIVE DISTRICT HAVE NO DOUBT CAUSED LDP SOME DISCOMFORT. SHOESMITH

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